UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

GENERAL

E/ECE/1239
20 February 1991

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Forty-sixth session
(Provisional Agenda item 4(h))

ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN IN THE LIGHT OF THE FINAL ACT OF THE CSCE

(Commission decision L (45))

Report by the Executive Secretary

1. This report has been prepared pursuant to paragraph 8 of decision L (45). 1/ In paragraph 2 of the decision the Commission called upon the Executive Secretary "after consultations with the interested Governments, to propose to the Principal Subsidiary Bodies for consideration to undertake action-oriented studies in the areas of co-operation already identified in his report E/ECE/1218 including in the field of the protection of the environment in the Mediterranean, and to make proposals to the relevant Principal Subsidiary Bodies of the Commission for consideration in their programme of work, taking all necessary measures to avoid duplication of work with other international organizations".

1/ Further information is contained in document E/ECE/1243.

2. In the Concluding Document of the CSCE Vienna Meeting the participating States agreed to convene a Meeting on the Mediterranean in order to consider ways of enhancing co-operation including the protection and improvement of Mediterranean ecosystems with the aim of widening the scope of their co-operation with the non-participating Mediterranean States and contributing to the strengthening of confidence and security in the region. In accordance with paragraph 7 of decision L (45), the Executive Secretary accepted the invitation to attend the Palma de Mallorca Meeting on the Mediterranean (24 September-19 October 1990) for which he prepared a written contribution.

3. The secretariat has continued to co-operate with the secretariats of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) on projects of common interest to all Mediterranean countries, as called for in paragraph 3 of decision L (45). The Executive Secretaries of the three regional commissions have consulted on projects of mutual interest.

4. The Executive Secretary has transmitted ECE documentation to non-ECE Mediterranean countries and has invited those countries to participate in relevant ECE meetings. Representatives from non-ECE Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Morocco, Tunisia) participated in ECE meetings during 1990 in the fields of agriculture, chemicals, gas, statistics, steel, trade, transport and the Senior Economic Advisers.

Development issues and policies

5. The south European countries which belong to the Mediterranean region are included in the analysis of developments contained in the Economic Bulletin for Europe, Vol.42 and the Economic Survey of Europe in 1989-1990. The latter publication contains a study entitled "Structural features of engineering goods trade" where the south European countries are included in the analysis. In addition the secretariat is still carrying out a project on population, development and migration in close collaboration with selected south European countries (Bulgaria, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Turkey and Yugoslavia).

Food and agriculture (including forestry products)

7. The Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce, and notably its Meetings of Experts on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables and of Dry and Dried Produce, deal with produce of considerable economic interest to Mediterranean countries. This interest is reflected in the participation of countries from this region in meetings and also in regular requests for material and information. In the coming years the increasing interest of consumers in high quality horticultural products will further influence the quality aspects of agricultural products in international markets. The increased interest and participation of exporting countries outside the ECE region in the activities of the Working Party and the Meetings of Experts are likely further to strengthen their role in international trade facilitation, particularly as the ECE standards serve as the basis for existing and proposed European Community and CMEA standards. More active expert participation in ECE standardization activities would serve to enhance the position of the Mediterranean countries in export trade.

8. The publication for the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training, prepared under the direction of Spanish experts and involving other south European countries, on afforestation techniques for Mediterranean-type conditions, was issued in English, French and Spanish. The International Forest Fire News continued to be issued on a bi-annual basis. Preparations continued for a Seminar on Forest Fires, Land Use and People which will be held in Greece in October/November 1991. The topic is of particular concern to countries in the Mediterranean region. Preparations are also in hand for a seminar in Spain in November 1991 on Vocational Training of Forest Workers, aimed especially at countries in southern Europe.

9. At its forty-eighth session, the Timber Committee regretted that for its programme element on trends, prospects and policies in forestry and forest products in southern Europe, new proposals had not been submitted by the countries concerned. It maintained the topic in the work programme and urged the countries of southern Europe to consider which activities could be undertaken by the Committee in this respect.

Environment

10. An Ad hoc meeting convened in December 1990 in Antalya (Turkey), finalized the European Red List of Threatened Animals and Plants including recommendations to ECE Governments for its application. A number of experts from Mediterranean countries participated in the finalization of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, in the elaboration of the Conventions on Transboundary Impacts of Industrial Accidents and on Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes as well as in many other environment-related activities.

11. Under the ECE/UNDP Project on "Environmental Planning and Management: Air Pollution (RER/87/010), five sub-programmes for air pollution abatement technology are now operational: flue-gas treatment; fuel treatment; standard-setting and economic incentives; low-emission combustion processes (lead-country: Yugoslavia); by-product utilization and disposal (lead-country: Malta). A meeting on industrial co-operation for air pollution control technology was held in Dubrovnik (Yugoslavia) in September 1990, with participation from 20 countries, including seven Mediterranean countries.

Human settlements

12. Preparations have continued for the Meeting of Experts on Human Settlements Problems in Southern Europe, to be held in Ankara (Turkey) on 24-26 April 1991. The Meeting will hold in-depth discussions on "Regeneration and Adaptation of Urban Space in Response to the Dynamics of Development Specific to the Mediterranean Countries".

Industrial development

13. A Seminar on Changes in Eastern Chemical Markets - the Role of Joint Ventures, Wholly-owned Subsidiaries and Industry Federations, held in December 1990 in Warsaw (Poland) was attended by several experts from Mediterranean countries. The study on the rational use of water and its treatment in the chemical industry, to be issued in 1991, should be of interest to several

Mediterranean countries. The High-level Meeting on Co-operation and Sustainable Development in the Chemical Industry which will be held towards the end of 1991 should be of particular importance for Mediterranean countries.

14. A Seminar on Air Pollution Control in Engineering Industries, held in November 1990 in Geneva at the invitation of the Government of Switzerland, attracted the attention of experts from several Mediterranean countries. A study on food-processing machinery, including packaging techniques will be issued in 1991 and should be of particular interest to countries in the Mediterranean region.

15. The Seminar on Technical and Economic Aspects of the Manufacture and Application of Coated Steel Products, held in Genoa (Italy) in May 1990, attracted the participation of a large number of experts from Mediterranean countries.

International trade and development finance

16. At the thirty-ninth session of the Committee on the Development of Trade proposals were made by some delegations to the effect that the ECE secretariat elaborate on the possibilities of stimulating trade and investment relations between the reforming countries of eastern Europe and the member countries of the ECE which are developing from the economic point of view. It was further suggested that the secretariat examine the possibilities of improving trade and economic co-operation among interested countries on a regional basis, and provide guidelines for attracting investments from developed to developing member countries of the ECE.

Energy issues

17. ECE pursued its programme in the field of new and renewable sources of energy in finalizing preparations for the Seminar on Solar Power Systems, to be held in Alushta (USSR) in April 1991 with working sessions on solar photovoltaic systems, solar thermal systems, solar hybrid systems, future applications and economic aspects of solar power systems, and a Round Table on the Development and Utilization of Solar Power Systems in the Future.

18. The ECE/UNDP Project on Solar Applications and Energy Efficiency in Building Design and Town Planning (RER/87/006) was implemented as planned during the period under review with the participation, inter alia, of representatives of Albania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Malta, Turkey and Yugoslavia. Expertise is being provided for the preparation of computer programmes, design guidelines and training courses for energy efficient buildings using passive solar heating and free cooling in hot climate countries.

19. An ECE information campaign "Energy Efficiency 2000" has been approved. This project aims at reducing the gap in energy efficiency between member States by information exchanges among business men, energy engineers, bankers and trade officials on the occasion of national conventions, trade fairs and other events at industry level. The Governments of Cyprus, Malta, Greece, Yugoslavia and Italy, among others, have indicated their willingness to participate in this project.

20. ECE programmes to enhance the environmentally-sound production and use of low-calorie-value coal continued, both within the related UNDP/ECE Inter-country Project and through the subsidiary structure of the Working Party on Coal. A Symposium on Environmental Protection in Opencast Mines will be held in the United Kingdom in 1992 which will be of interest to Mediterranean countries using this extraction method.

21. In the field of gas a study is being undertaken on the future prospects for the further integration and extension of gas grids in the ECE region. For countries bordering the Mediterranean this study is of particular significance as they seek to diversify and increase gas exports and imports.

Transport, communications and tourism

22. The Transport Study Centre for the Eastern Mediterranean in Volos (Greece), the Transport Study Centre for the Western Mediterranean in Barcelona (Spain), and the Transport Training Centre in Istanbul (Turkey) continue to co-operate with the Inland Transport Committee and to make a positive contribution to its programme of work. It is envisaged that these centres will concentrate on subjects of specific interest to the Mediterranean countries.

23. Work on the implementation of the Trans-European North-South Motorway Project (TEM) has continued with the financial assistance of UNDP. The Project countries have decided to include east-west connections in the TEM corridor. Changing conditions in the eastern part of Europe have provided the necessary conditions for possible international financing of the construction of this motorway. The TEM motorway system when completed will provide a continuous link between the north European region and the Mediterranean.

24. The UNDP project on International Transport Development: Mediterranean, Europe and Middle East is ready for implementation. A consultative meeting on the Project was held in October 1990 to revise its Formulation Framework and a project document is being circulated to ECE member Governments. Subject to the signature of three Governments, the Project is expected to be operational by the spring of 1991. The Project includes the establishment of a data base and a communication systems for the transfer of transport data regarding the Mediterranean outlets of the European transport network.

25. A constitutive meeting on the Trans-European North-South Railway (TER) Project took place in March 1990, at which it was decided that in the light of recent developments in Europe, east-west lines should also be included in the Project. At the first session of the Project Steering Committee the institutional structure of the Project was determined, the Project Manager was selected and the Project Central Office was later opened in Budapest. Among the present and potential member countries, there are several countries of the Mediterranean; therefore it is foreseen to include sections of importance for this region in the Project.

26. A European Traffic Flow Project under consideration is conceived as an umbrella project for all planned or on-going European transport projects. Its main function would be to create a traffic flow data base covering the whole of Europe and to establish the necessary institutional arrangements for its

operation. UNDP experts have been working with ECE on the project document. In the meantime a joint EEC/ECE study has been launched on prospects and requirements of east-west transport developments.

27. Regarding the Europe-Africa Permanent link through the Strait of Gibraltar, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1987/69, invited ECA and ECE to co-operate with the Governments of Morocco and Spain in realizing the preliminary studies and evaluating these experiences for a possible link of the two continents. Interim reports on developments are presented biennially to the Council. A symposium held in May 1990 covered engineering, economic, technical and legal aspects of the Project reviewing most of the studies done during the previous eight years. A joint ECA/ECE report was presented to this symposium. The next interim report will be presented to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1991.

28. A project on sustainable tourism development is carried out jointly by the Committee on Housing, Building and Planning, the Inland Transport Committee and the Senior Advisers on Environmental and Water Problems. The secretariat co-operates closely with the secretariat of the World Tourism Organization (WTO) in implementing the project. A Symposium will be held from 28 to 30 October 1991 in Luxembourg to establish a roundtable for government agencies concerned at different levels and the operational sector (business community) of tourism. The discussions will focus on the impact of tourism planning and investment on the natural and man-made environment, land-use, transport infrastructure and transport operation.

Statistics

29. The proposal of the Palma de Mallorca CSCE Meeting that the Conference of European Statisticians convene a meeting of statistical offices of the Mediterranean countries will be considered by the Conference in June 1991.

30. The ECE has continued its work in the Statistical Computing Project, Phase 2 (SCP-2), with the financial assistance of UNDP. The aim of the project is to further improve statistical computing capabilities in national statistical offices, particularly in European IPF countries and in developing countries, including countries of the Mediterranean. A list of available outputs of the project was sent to the other regional commissions and to statistical offices of the ECE region.

31. The ECE has co-operated with the UN Statistical Office National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP), in order to make the programme known to Albania and Romania, and to provide the statistical offices concerned with the respective documentation. The UN Statistical Office and the UN Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCD) has provided support for installing a Local Area Network (LAN) in the Statistical Office of Albania.